

Popular ribfest event shelved due to ongoing COVID-19 crisis

Written By MIKE BAKER

It's going to be a disappointing summer for local BBQ enthusiasts, the Orangeville Rotary Club having confirmed on Sunday (March 29) that it would be cancelling this year's Rotary Ribfest.

"While the July event is still months away, we recognize that this is not the time to continue planning this large undertaking. Regretfully, the 11th Ribfest will have to wait until July 2021," said Taunya Bailey and Michael Wright, co-chairs of Orangeville Rotary Ribfest, in a statement distributed to local media.

Ribfest is the local Rotary Club's chief fundraiser. Since 2010, the event has raked in more than \$600,000 in money that has been invested right back into the community.

In recent years, proceeds raised through the Orangeville Rotary Ribfest have gone towards constructing the splashpad at Fendley Park, building a new natural playground at Island Lake Conservation Area, purchasing a gazebo for Headwaters Health Care Centre, supporting the west quadrant of the Dufferin County Cultural Resource Circle's medicine wheel garden at Bravery Park, carrying out a complete renovation of the kitchen at the Orangeville Food Bank, and, as has been the case for several years, supporting the popular GrandPals program, which runs at several elementary schools in the community.

While the club had initially identified several projects it planned to fund with the proceeds from this year's Ribfest, it now looks like being a down year although Ms. Bailey and Mr. Wright maintain the local Rotary membership are raring to go, and will be back working for the community as soon as the current COVID-19 crisis passes.

"Ribfest is the main fundraiser for our club, and this will definitely affect our ability to financially support the community for the next year, however, once this health emergency is over, be assured that the Rotary Club of Orangeville will maintain our commitment of 'Service over Self'. We are waiting to get back to work," the pair said.

They continued, "At this time, we would like to acknowledge the support of our sponsors, vendors and volunteers who make this annual event a success. We will certainly miss you this year. Next year we will attempt to make Ribfest bigger and better."

The 11th annual Orangeville Rotary Ribfest is now slated to take place from July 16 to 18 in 2021.